

MEMORANDUM

16 November 1945

TO: Chief, PACMIRS
FROM: Major D.L.M. Macfarlane
SUBJECT: Appreciation - Collection of Japanese
Ministerial Records

Acquisition Project II.

1. Purpose To acquire archives and records of the Japanese ministries and other government offices that will be of value to the Allies.
2. Situation The Japanese predilection for statistics and formal records is nowhere more in evidence than in government offices. A vast amount of material will no doubt be available and it will be necessary to exercise considerable judgement as to the fields on which data is required and the classes of material in those fields which are likely to be of value. On the other hand, some government records have been destroyed and no doubt much valuable material has already been seized by intelligence agencies.

The actual search and selection of records will not take place until SCAP announces procedure but preliminary work will, it is hoped, be initiated through Japanese Liaison Section soon after WDC (Adv) is set up in Tokyo.

3. Considerations

a. Although Japanese officials are reported to have co-operated with Allied agencies making intelligence searches, it is most unlikely that full and correct information will be forthcoming on the secret or confidential files of government offices. Further, any suggestion that a particular class of document is being sought may result in its destruction or concealment. It is, however, unlikely that further destruction will now take place without such a warning, since the Japanese probably hope that Allied interest in official records is progressively declining.

b. Government offices other than ministries which are of semi-ministerial status will certainly contain much material of importance. For instance, the fullest information on Manchuria will no doubt be found in the files of the South Manchurian Railway Office, the most complete data on technical air experiments carried out by the army will be in Air Headquarters, Tokyo.

c. Guidance as to the material to be sought at each ministry will be obtained from WDIT and from the liaison officers within that section as well as from War Department Intelligence Target Folders. Further briefing will no doubt be received through Information Section from Allied agencies elsewhere.

d. Duplication will in general be avoided but at least three copies of maps and charts will be obtained when possible, and forwarded so that originals will be available for both the United States and the British agencies concerned, with a third copy remaining for the WDC library.

e. The Japanese filing systems and the classification of documents will to some extent act as guides to the importance of material and the most highly classified documents will generally be seized. However, by itself this guidance will by no means be sufficient: for instance, there are many gaps in Allied knowledge of Manchurian communications which can probably be filled from unclassified railway maps.

4. Method

a. A sub-section consisting of M/Sgt. ITAMI and at least one enlisted man will be detailed to deal specifically with this project. However, it will probably be necessary to obtain the assistance of one or more Field Teams to do initial searches and scanning at the ministerial offices.


2.

b. When procedure has been approved, the most important targets will be selected and the operation will commence. As wide a field as possible will be covered in the initial inspection so that a certain measure of surprise may be achieved. For instance, if practicable, the files of the Army and Navy ministries and Imperial General Headquarters will be inspected or at least put under guard simultaneously. These three will no doubt form the primary targets. Thereafter, priorities may be allotted somewhat along the following general lines.

- (1) Air Headquarters (Army)
- (2) Foreign Office
- (3) Home Office
- (4) Ministry of Great East Asia
- (5) Office of the South Manchurian Railway
- (6) Munitions Ministry
- (7) Ministry of Transport and Communications
(UNYU TSUSHINSHO)
- (8) Ministry of Education
- (9) Ministries of Justice, Finance, and Agriculture & Commerce
(NOSHOSHU)

An initial approach however may be made to the Education Ministry and the Home Office for lists of publications issued during the war years.

c. Archives will be evacuated to WDC (Rear) by the machinery provided to deal with other documents.


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c.c. for Lt. Col. Peter. Cady.